



# An emergency texting program for employees

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# BACKGROUND SMS INITIATIVE AT PUBLIC HEALTH

- 5-year CDC funded grant to study mobile for emergency communications
- Focus on logistics, costs, legal, audiences
  - Audiences – general King County population (adult texters); limited English proficiency, rural; Deaf & Hard of Hearing, PH employees

# EMPLOYEE TEXTING PROGRAM

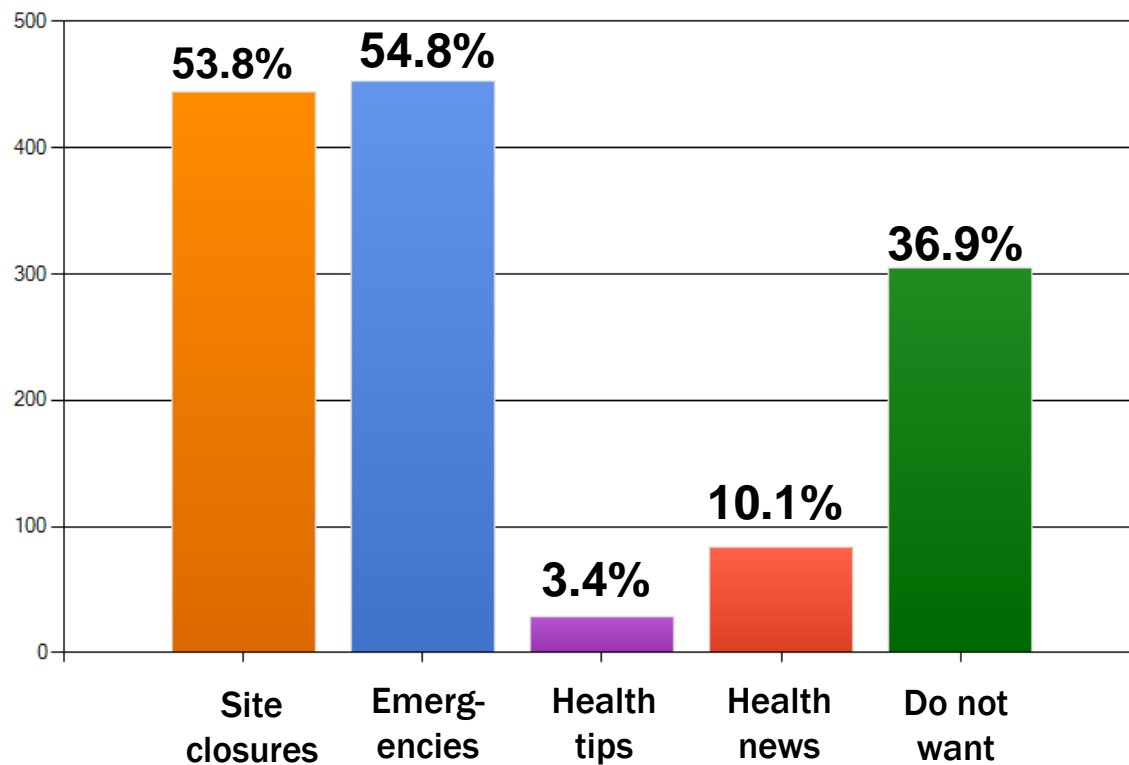
Goal: Offer an emergency texting program to all public health employees that is ...

- useful
- acceptable to employees
- easy to enroll and opt-out,
- voluntary
- easy to manage
- at a reasonable cost to the department

# STEP 1: AUDIENCE RESEARCH

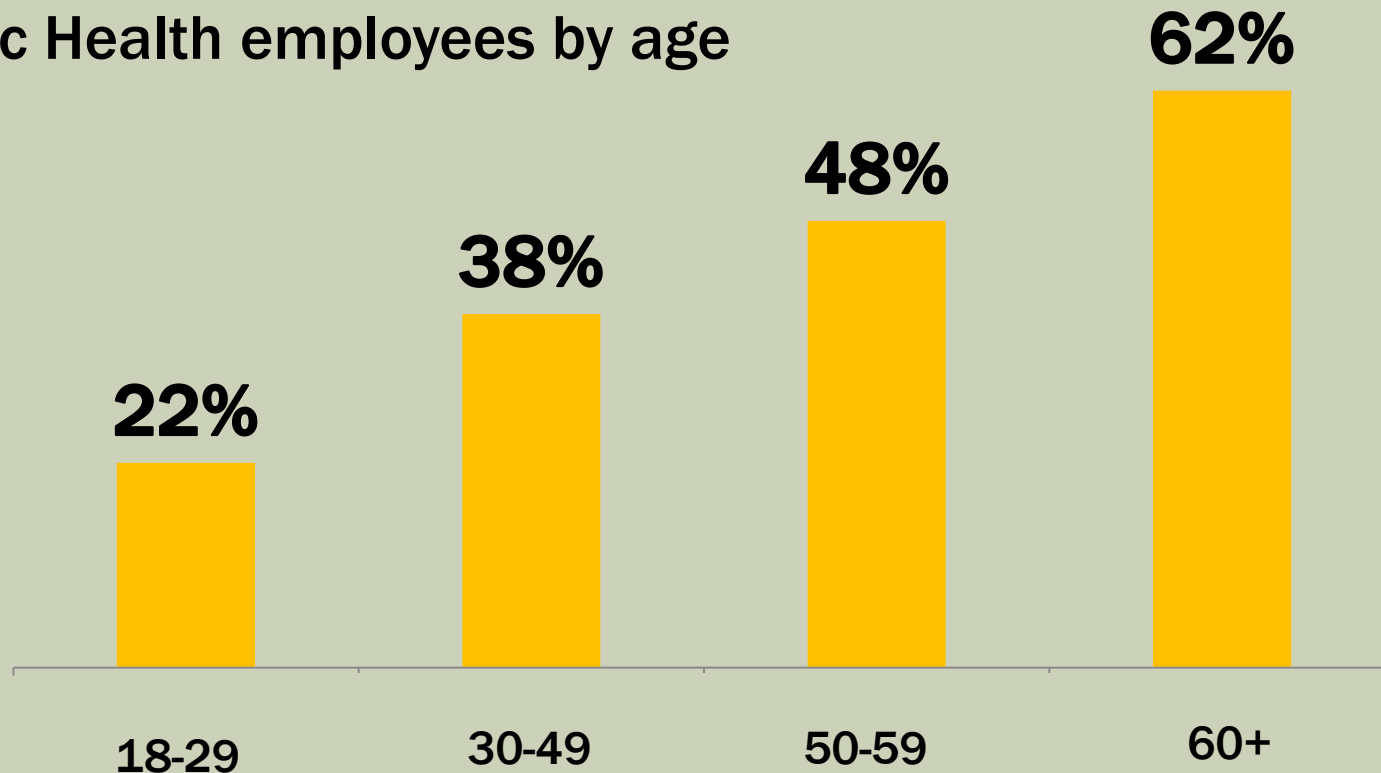
- met with administration, IT, unions
- interviewed key informants across the department
- developed and administered survey
  - asked about barriers & benefits

# TOPICS OF INTEREST



# WHO IS **UNLIKELY** TO SIGN UP?

Public Health employees by age



# COMMENTS

- **This is a great idea, and something that would likely work well especially when phone lines are busy.**
- **Keep it simple. Critical emergency and work site closure information only.**
- **I don't want to be notified about work issues on my off time. PERIOD.**
- **It seems like a bad idea and a huge waste of King County \$ and resources.**

# STEP 2. BUILT & MARKETED THE PROGRAM

The screenshot shows the txtwire Dashboard interface within a Mozilla Firefox browser window. The browser's address bar displays the URL `http://www.txtwire.com/dashboard/message`. The dashboard header includes the txtwire logo with the tagline "expect more from a text!" and a user login status: "Currently logged in as Sharon Bogan | Log Out".

The main navigation bar contains tabs for "Message Center", "Calendar", "Inbox", "Reports", and "Manage". The "Message Center" tab is active, showing a "Recipients" section with options for "Organization Tree", "Address Book", and "Individual". Under "Organization Tree", "King County Public Health (1058)" is selected. A "Schedule Message" checkbox is also present.

The "Message" section contains a "From:" field with "Public Health Department" and a "Message:" text area containing the text: "Water contamination in zipcode 55555. Please boil water until further notice." Below the text area, it shows "Characters: 55 / Messages: 1".

The "Preview" section displays a mobile phone screen showing the same message content. Below the message section is a "Templates" dropdown menu set to "Select" and a "Send Message" button.

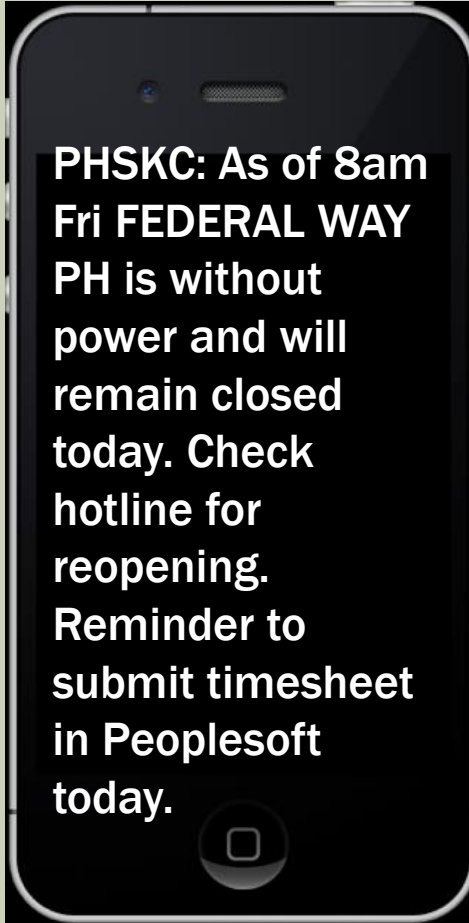
The footer of the dashboard includes links for "TERMS | PRIVACY | SUPPORT | CONTACT" and a copyright notice: "© 2011 txtwire Technologies. All rights reserved. v4.2.8".



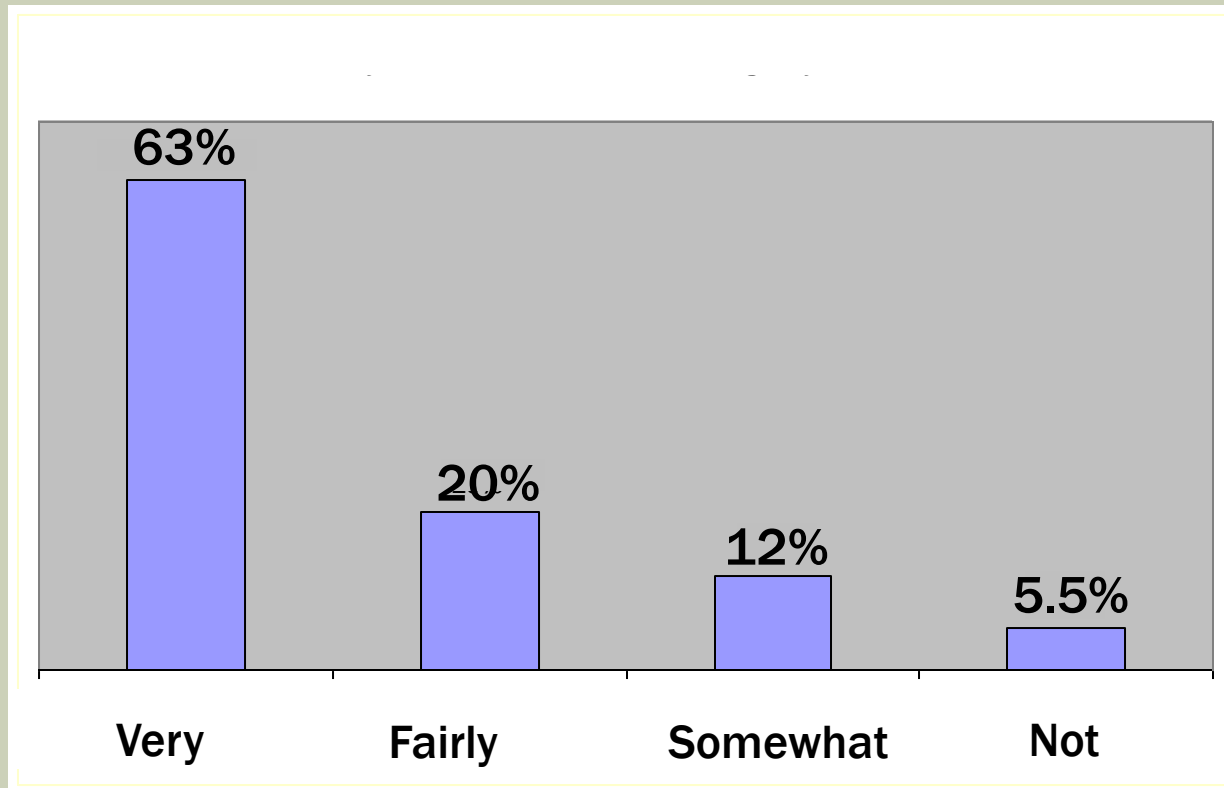
# STEP 3. IMPLEMENTATION

## SNOWMAGEDDON 2012

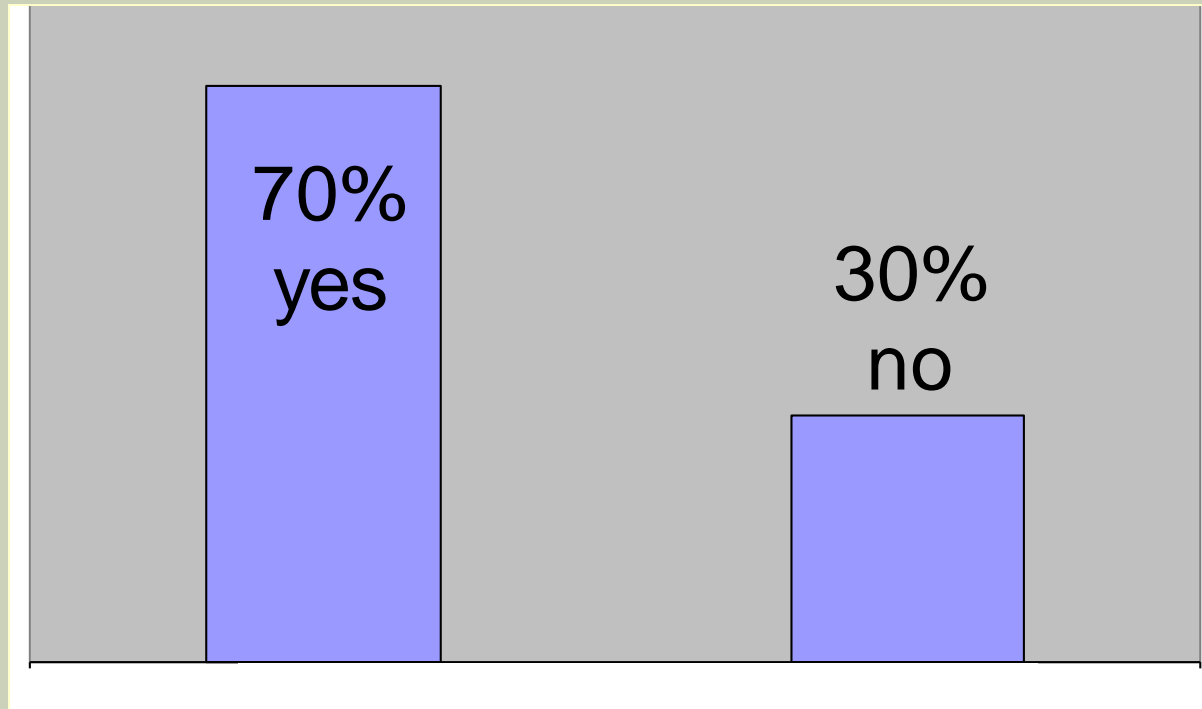
**We sent  
15 text  
messages  
over 5  
days of  
the snow  
and ice  
storm.**



# WERE THE TEXT MESSAGES RELEVANT AND HELPFUL?



**On at least one occasion, did you receive a text message alert before you heard about the information another way (e.g. website, email message or employee hotline)?**



# LESSONS LEARNED

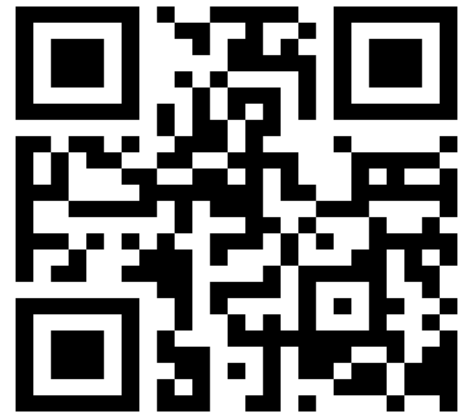
- know that text messaging is useful for emergencies
- understand your audience
- deliver what you promise
- control expectations
- test and train
- try to partner - vendor costs/service vary

# FOR MORE INFORMATION OR TO CONTACT US ABOUT OUR TEXT MESSAGING PROJECT:

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[www.kingcounty.gov/health/texting](http://www.kingcounty.gov/health/texting)



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